

Message Text

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ACTION SNM-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 NSCE-00
DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-13 JUSE-00 NSAE-00
CTME-00 TRSE-00 OES-07 OMB-01 INRE-00 /047 W
-----033700 160259Z /13

O R 162320Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO USMISSION GENEVA NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 6385

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 1501

GENEVA DELIVER MATHEA FALCO AT OPENING OF BUSINESS

DEPARTMENT FOR J. LINNEMANN (S/NM)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, CO
SUBJECT: REVIEW OF NARCOTICS COOPERATION WITH ATTORNEY GENERAL
AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE

REF: GENEVA 2336

1. FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON SITUATION HERE MAY BE USEFUL TO YOU
IN YOUR REVIEW OF NARCOTICS COOPERATION WITH AG SERRANO AND
MINISTER OF JUSTICE GOMEZ FEB 16.

2. RESPONSIBLE GOC OFFICIALS AND MISSION OFFICERS RECOGNIZE
ATTORNEY GENERAL'S NARCOTICS UNIT MUST BEGIN ACTUAL OPERATIONS
SHORTLY AND REGISTER SOME SUCCESSES IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE THE
UNIT'S CONTINUED EXISTENCE AFTER THE CHANGE OF PRESIDENTIAL
ADMINISTRATIONS IN AUGUST 1978. HOWEVER, SOME BUREAUCRATIC
PROBLEMS ARE DELAYING THE PROCESS.

3. THE PACING PROBLEM AT THE MOMENT IS THE OFFICIAL NAMING OF
THE PERSONNEL FOR THE UNIT. A GOOD LIST OF APPLICANTS HAS
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ALREADY BEEN DRAWN UP, BUT UNLESS THEY ARE OFFICIALLY
APPOINTED SOON, THERE WILL BE A LOSS OF INTEREST AND
MOMENTUM, AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOME OF THE DEA TRAINING
ALREADY SCHEDULED WILL BE LOST. THE AG DEPARTED BOGOTA
FOR GENEVA WITHOUT OFFICIALLY NAMING THE APPLICANTS,
OSTENSIBLY BECAUSE THE PROBLEM OF LACK OF WEAPONS. AS THAT
HAS NOW BEEN SOLVED, THE AG SHOULD BE URGED TO TAKE THE

NECESSARY PERSONNEL ACTIONS, PREFERABLY, IF LEGALLY POSSIBLE, PRIOR TO HIS RETURN TO BOGOTA.
FYI: DEPUTY A.G. GARCIA POSED THIS PROBLEM IN TERMS OF CANCELLING OR POSTPONING SCHEDULED DEA COURSES AND ADVISING THAT IT MIGHT BE AS MUCH AS THREE MONTHS BEFORE NARCOTICS UNIT COULD BE FULLY EFFECTIVE. SINCE APPOINTMENTS TO THE UNIT COULD NOT BE MADE WITH A.G. OUT OF COUNTRY. HE WAS ADVISED BY SAIC ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM AMBASSADOR THAT UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES WE WOULD REGRETFULLY NOT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE WEAPONS OR OTHER SUPPORT SINCE THE WHOLE POINT OF ESTABLISHING THE UNIT WOULD BE VITIATED. THIS SEEMED TO HAVE THE DESIRED EFFECT. END FYI.

4. THE FIFTY MILLION PESO BUDGET APPROVED BY THE PRESIDENT FOR THE NARCOTICS UNIT HAS NOT YET BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO THE AG'S OFFICE, WHICH MAY BE A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IN THE DELAY IN NAMING PERSONNEL AS WELL AS INHIBITING THE ACQUISITION OF NECESSARY SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT. THE AG'S OFFICER HERE AND THE MISSION ARE APPROACHING THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE ON THIS SUBJECT, BUT THE AG AND MINISTER SHOULD ALSO PRESS THE MATTER FROM GENEVA.

5. DEA HAS SCHEDULED TWO THREE-WEEK TRAINING SCHOOLS FOR THE NARCOTICS UNIT PERSONNEL, THE FIRST ONE TO BEGIN FEBRUARY 27. THIS TRAINING SCHEDULE IS BEING JEOPARDIZED
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BY THE DELAYS IN APPOINTING THE UNIT PERSONNEL. THE MISSION HOPES THAT THE SCHEDULE CAN BE PRESERVED THROUGH INFORMAL, COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS INVOLVING AG AND CUSTOMS PERSONNEL THAT WOULD ULTIMATELY BECOME PART OF THE UNIT ANYWAY. THE AG'S SUPPORT FROM A DISTANCE IS NEEDED TO ASSURE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENT CAN BE MADE.

6. WITH THE SUPPLY OF WEAPONS ASSURED, SOME QUESTIONS ARE BEING RAISED ON THE COLOMBIAN SIDE AS TO THE MECHANICS FOR ENTERING THEM INTO THE COUNTRY AND ASSIGNING THEM OVER TO THE AG'S OFFICE EXPEDITIOUSLY. THIS SUBJECT IS ALSO BEING RAISED WITH THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENCY BY THE AG'S OFFICE AND THE MISSION, BUT AGAIN SERRANO'S ACTIVE CONTRIBUTION TO FINDING THE BEST PROCEDURES AND MAKING THE NECESSARY BUREAUCRATIC ARRANGEMENTS IS ESSENTIAL.

7. YOUR ADDITIONAL ASSURANCE TO THE AG AND MINISTER OF U.S. INTEREST IN AND SUPPORT FOR THE NARCOTICS UNIT IN THE FORM OF TRAINING, COMMODITY SUPPORT, AND INTELLIGENCE IS IMPORTANT. THE POINT SHOULD ALSO BE MADE, HOWEVER, THAT ULTIMATELY THE COLOMBIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE JOINT EFFORT

WILL DETERMINE THE SUCCESS OF THE UNIT AND THE CONTINUING
NARCOTICS PROGRAM IN COLOMBIA.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DRUG CONTROL, PERSONNEL TRAINING, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BOGOTA01501
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780070-0822
Format: TEL
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780249/aaaabpga.tel
Line Count: 119
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9638dbd5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SNM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 GENEVA 2336
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3578036
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REVIEW OF NARCOTICS COOPERATION WITH ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE
TAGS: SNAR, CO, US
To: GENEVA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9638dbd5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014